

Honors Courses in North Carolina: Science

Honors Science Courses

Course descriptions for the following high school science honors courses: Honors Biology, Honors Chemistry, Honors Earth/Environmental Science, Honors Physical Science and Honors Physics are included in this document. Local school districts may also develop local honors versions of such courses as Anatomy and Physiology or Molecular Genetics. All of the honors science courses share the following characteristics and assumptions:

- Students enrolled in honors courses will learn the material in the standard course of study for the course at greater depth than in the standard level version of the course. The support documents for the course include appropriate honors extensions by objective.
- Students enrolled in the honors version of the course will take the same EOC as students enrolled in the standard level version of the course.
- Students who choose an honors science course are expected to work more independently than students in standard level courses.
- Because students can be expected to cover the standard level material more independently there will be time for more enrichment topics as specified in the course descriptions for specific honors courses.
- Students who choose an honors science course will be expected to complete more independent in-depth scientific investigations and to report on them using a more formal scientific laboratory report format.
- Students who choose an honors science course will be expected to read and present orally and in writing recent scientific findings.

Many of the materials and activities suggested for honors courses will also be appropriate for some students enrolled in standard level versions of the course. The difference may be in the level of independence expected of students and the amount of time activities may take. All students, not just those in honors courses, should experience challenging work and some level of independent inquiry in their science courses. Teachers should include some of the enrichment topics for all students.

Definition of Honors Science Courses

Honors science courses are designed to demand more challenging involvement than standard science courses. They must be demonstrably more challenging than standard courses and provide multiple opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their learning. Honors science courses should be distinguished by a difference in the quality of the work expected rather than merely by the quantity of the work required.

Purposes of Honors Science Courses

Honors science courses should be designed for students who have demonstrated an advanced level of interest and achievement in a given subject area. The rationale for honors courses is not to provide a means to attract students to enroll in classes for additional credit, but rather to offer challenging, higher level courses for students who aspire to an advanced level of learning. Furthermore, students and parents should be